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ROLF Hochhuth's latest drama—and therefore his latest controversy — is "Guerrillas," which attacks American big business and describes a conspiracy to overthrow the U.S. government.

The young German playwright — who wrote "The Deputy," about Pope Pius' failure to save the Jews from the Nazis, and "Soldiers," which suggests that Winston Churchill had the Polish Gen. Sikorski killed in a plane crash — has filled his stage once more with bishops and high-ranking officials.

But the drama, which had its premiere May 15 in Stuttgart (Germany) at the Baden-Wuerttemberg State Theater, is not convincing, even though Hochhuth says he hopes it will incite a workers' revolution in the United States.

Hochhuth's premise that the current United States government itself is a conspiratorial alliance of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and big business is simply too poorly sketched to be acceptable.

IT IS HARD for an American reviewer to be totally objective about an anti-American play, but the opening-night German audience showed by its faint applause and the scattered but vigorous boos when the author took his bows that

The newest Hochhuth controversy

'Guerrillas' rips U.S. business, calls for a workers' revolution

By DONALD R. SHANOR

Hochhuth had also failed to convince most of its members.

Part of his failure is poor homework. The imprisonment of Teamster Union chief James Hoffa, for example, is treated as an act of martyrdom. "Hoffa's in jail," the hero, Sen. David Nicholson, announces to his fellow conspirators. "Bob Kennedy has beheaded the only union that was socialist."

Another character protests that the transport workers will certainly fight the verdict with strikes. Impossible, Nicholson replies, the FBI and the CIA have infiltrated them for years.

The other part of Hochhuth's failure is poor writing; charac-

ters chant their lines as though they were reading political science texts when, after a long discussion on whether urban or rural Marxism is more effective, the Senator and a Green Beret officer lie prone on the stage in fatigue. The audience is with them in spirit.

There are wooden lines, like this one of the Green Beret: "I'm an atheist, in contrast to Castro, whose life was once saved by a bishop, but I'm only one because God is used so often to turn attention from the Earth."

THE PLAY has many potentials for action and excitement. The hero, Nicholson, is at once a wealthy man, a Senator, the owner of a shipyard that builds Polaris-armed submarines and the leader of a guerrilla conspiracy that aims to wrest power from the 200 top families that control the United States with CIA support.

Through infiltration of the Pentagon, the TV networks and even the church, they hope to stage a coup that will give the United States something

had—a genuine workers' political party.

Nicholson plans to use one submarine to threaten Washington with destruction. But in a confusing hyplay involving U.S. imperialism in Guatemala and Bolivia, the plan falls into the hands of the CIA and he is killed in a fake suicide.

In the meantime, Hochhuth has time to comment on the other conspiracies he says are or were afoot in America. President Kennedy was killed by his own policemen to the benefit of his successors in the White House. The suicides of former Defense Secretary James Forrestal and other officials in the past 20 years, the audience is assured, could not have been what they seem. J. Edgar Hoover and the late Cardinal Spellman are attacked, as is the Papal Index and the prudes who oppose the Kinsey Report. Character after character steps forward to spout statistics about the injuries from rat bites or the growth of the FBI. In the eyes of the hero, and presumably the author, this justifies the use of violence to put in a new government with a fuzzy seven-point program that is part Lenin and part Huey Long.

THERE ARE real and enormous problems in the United States, and they should be scrutinized by social commentators with the potential of Hochhuth. Had "Guerrillas" done that, it would have been able to take its place in the long list of useful works of criticism, from Ibsen to Lorraine Hansberry.

It does not belong with them. It does not even belong with "The Deputy" and "Soldiers."

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